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ACTION SCT-00

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-08	ACDE-00	AID-00	AMAD-01	ARA-01	A-00
	CA-02	CCO-00	CG-00	CIAE-00	COME-00	CTME-00	OASY-00
	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DOT-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-01
	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	FBO-01	H-01	IMMC-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
	INSE-00	JUSE-00	LAB-01	L-01	ADS-00	MMP-00	M-00
	NRCE-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OCS-03	OIS-01	OMB-01	OPIC-01
	OPR-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	P-00	CIO-00	SP-00
	SSO-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	USSS-00	ASDS-01	IMCC-01
	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-04	G-00	/031W		

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P 201959Z NOV 97
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8752

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 005891

FOR S/CT AND ARA/BSC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/19/07
TAGS: PTER, PGOV, PREL, AR
SUBJECT: AMIA BOMBING SUSPECT RECEIVED USD 2.5 MILLION
ONE WEEK BEFORE ATTACK

REFS: A) BUENOS AIRES 5547, B) STATE 212284

CLASSIFIED BY V. MANUEL ROCHA, CHARGE. REASON: 1.5
(D).

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1. (U) THE SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE ARGENTINE CONGRESS INVESTIGATING THE AMIA AND ISRAELI EMBASSY BOMBINGS ANNOUNCED ON NOVEMBER 13 THAT ONE OF THE PRIME SUSPECTS IN THE AMIA CASE, FORMER BUENOS AIRES PROVINCIAL POLICE CAPTAIN JUAN RIBELLI, HAD RECEIVED USD 2.5 MILLION JUST ONE WEEK BEFORE THE 1994 BOMBING. THE COMMITTEE SHOWED THE PRESS A COPY OF A NOTARIZED DOCUMENT IN WHICH RIBELLI'S FATHER, A 90-YEAR-OLD FORMER RAILWAY WORKER, HAD GIVEN HIS FIVE CHILDREN THE USD 2.5 MILLION AS PART OF A "LIVING WILL." THE COMMITTEE SAID RIBELLI'S SIBLINGS HAD IN TURN PASSED THE MONEY ON TO HIM. THE DAY FOLLOWING THIS "GIFT," A GROUP OF POLICE OFFICERS WORKING FOR RIBELLI PICKED UP THE RENAULT TRAFFIC VAN USED IN THE BOMBING.

2. (U) THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ANNOUNCED THAT IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE BOMBING, RIBELLI HAD USED A FICTITIOUS NAME TO RENT A HOTEL ROOM IN THE MIDDLE OF ROOMS RENTED BY THE ISRAELI EMBASSY FOR USE BY ISRAELI GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATORS. SPECULATION IS THAT RIBELLI WAS INTENT ON DISCOVERING THE RESULTS OF THEIR INVESTIGATION.

3. (U) THE COMMITTEE HAS CALLED FOR RIBELLI'S FORMER SUPERIOR, EX-CHIEF OF POLICE FOR BUENOS AIRES PROVINCE PEDRO KLODCYZK TO APPEAR BEFORE IT AND GIVE TESTIMONY. (IN THE PAST KLODCYZK HAS BEEN RUMORED TO BE CLOSELY LINKED WITH CORRUPT OFFICERS IN THE PROVINCIAL POLICE FORCE AND WITH RIBELLI IN PARTICULAR.)

4. (C) CHARGE, LEGATT, AND POLOFF MET ON NOVEMBER 19 WITH JUAN GALEANO, INVESTIGATING JUDGE IN THE AMIA
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CASE, AND JORGE PALACIOS, THE HEAD OF THE FEDERAL POLICE'S NEW ANTI-TERRORISM UNIT, TO REVIEW THESE EVENTS. GALEANO CONFIRMED THAT HE AND PALACIOS' UNIT HAD DISCOVERED THE USD 2.5 MILLION TRANSACTION. HE ADMITTED THAT THE NEW EVIDENCE WAS CIRCUMSTANTIAL, BUT STRESSED THAT IT DOES POINT TO DIRECT LINKS BETWEEN RIBELLI AND THE BOMBING, AS WELL AS PROVIDE THE MOTIVE OF FINANCIAL GAIN FOR THE ARGENTINE PARTICIPANTS.

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5. (C) GALEANO STILL BELIEVES THAT IRAN WAS BEHIND THE BOMBING. HE HAS OTHER CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE POINTING TO THE INVOLVEMENT OF A MEMBER OF THE IRANIAN DIPLOMATIC MISSION. HE LAID OUT A POSSIBLE WAY HE COULD WIND UP THE INVESTIGATION. IT WOULD MEAN LITTLE IF AN ARGENTINE JUDGE WERE TO CLAIM IRANIAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE BOMBING BASED ONLY ON THE EVIDENCE HE HAS BEEN ABLE TO GATHER. INSTEAD HE WANTS TO SHOW THAT THERE IS A PATTERN OF IRANIAN INVOLVEMENT IN SUCH TERRORIST ATTACKS AND THAT THE AMIA CASE IS SIMILAR TO THOSE IN GERMANY, THAILAND, AND ELSEWHERE. THIS WOULD GIVE MORE WEIGHT TO HIS JUDGMENT, HE BELIEVES. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT HE REQUESTED USG INFORMATION (REF A). THE CHARGE TOLD GALEANO THAT AS SOON AS THE EMBASSY RECEIVES THE INFORMATION REQUESTED IN REFTELS, WE WILL PROVIDE IT TO HIM. GALEANO THANKED US FOR OUR ASSISTANCE. CLEARLY, THESE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS, WHICH HAVE RECEIVED WIDE MEDIA COVERAGE, DO REPRESENT A PROMISING FRESH LEAD. ROCHA

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